GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1497
ANSWERED ON:24.07.2002
LAND WATER ROUTES THROUGH EASTERN COUNTRIES
KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU;SUNIL KHAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any scheme is on the anvil to promote land and water routes through eastern neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, the details of the countries which would be connected through this; and

(c) the enhancement in trade and commerce especially in the North East States as a result thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a) Yes Sir.

(b & c) The Government has been working on enhancing land/water routes with eastern neighbours that include Bangladesh and Myanmar. In case of Bangladesh, the Kolkata-Dhaka Bus Service, rail links between India and Bangladesh namely Gede - Darshana, Singhabad - Rohanpur, Petrapole - Benapole, Radhikapur - Birol and Mohishashon - Shahbazpur are in operation. In addition, the India-Bangladesh Inland Water Transit and Trade Protocol provides for movement of goods on waterways through Bangladesh. Agreements have been signed to start a bus service between Agartala and Dhaka and passenger train service between Sealdah and Bangabandhu Setu East.

In case of Myanmar, India has assisted in upgradation of a 160 km. Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo highway linking Myanmar and India.With the opening of this highway the areas in upper Myanmar up to Moreh have become accessible from border trade point of Moreh (Manipur) -Tamu (Myanmar). India is also involved in the Kaladan Multi-modal Project that includes upgradation of Sittwe Port in Myanmar and development of Inland Waterways and Highway along river Kaladan in Myanmar to link Mizoram with Bay of Bengal through Myanmar border. The detailed project report is currently under preparation.

A project regarding development of a trilateral highway joining Moreh (India), Tamu - Kalewa - Bagan (Myanmar) and Mae Sot up to Kanchanburi (Thailand) was discussed during a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of India, Myanmar and Thailand in Yangon in April 2002. This sub-regional project involves the construction of a highway of 1411.2 kms. which when complete will give India a shorter overland access to South-East Asia.

All the above measures are expected to facilitate India`s economic and commercial linkages to these countries and lead to easier accessibility and connectivity to the North-Eastern States.They would also lead to more socio-economic development of the North-Eastern region.